

Russian Roleplay by MissyMaestro

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Summary: Chief Jim Hopper is a hard man to break.

Russian Roleplay

Jim was a hard man to break. In their time living together, Joyce Byers was beginning to figure it out, but still hadn't given up her attempts to make him bend. The kids were out of the house and they'd finished up dinner and a bottle of wine. It was a perfectly lovely evening until the subject of curfew came up. The leftovers between them were cooling but another debate was just heating up.

Joyce glared at him. "You can't control teenagers, Jim. They'll just push back."

He set his glass down. It clinked a little too hard. "If the chief of police can't keep his own kids under control, what's the rest of the town gonna say?" Jim crossed his arms and sat back. "This isn't up for negotiation."

Joyce's eyes widened in surprise. "Excuse me? I'm not negotiating how I parent my kids in my home just because of what you do for work!"

"Nice, Joyce." Jim reached for his packet of cigarettes and slid one out. "I thought this was *our* home. Don't forget that you're the one who offered. I never asked. Me and El were looking at places."

She looked down and fussed with the edge of her place mat for a moment. "That's now what I meant. It's your home too. I'm sorry. But you know what I mean."

One point for Jim! He kept his hard expression pasted on his face. "So shouldn't I be part of the decision making? El can't be running all over town all hours of the night. We never know who else out there knows about all that's happened in Hawkins."

Joyce crossed her arms to mirror him. "Jonathan doesn't need someone telling him what to do. He's a good kid. An adult, practically! And Will is always at Mike's or Lucas's anyway. I'm not worried about them. They haven't given me a reason to. Even without an official curfew, Will's home at a decent time most nights."

"That's it. Most nights. I don't like to sit around and worry about my daughter. To preserve everyone's feelings I'm just asking that Will be given the same boundaries as El." Jim patted himself on the back for using her words. Boundaries. Feelings. Knockout strategy.

"Then extend El's curfew so that they're the same! It's not that hard."

"El is not having sleepovers at Mike's!" Jim barked.

Joyce smirked. "Too late for that one, Hop. She used to live in his basement."

Jim ran a hand down his face. "I can't discuss this again. We have to compromise." He looked up. Light bulb! "Wait. I'll fix up the basement. The kids can do whatever they do out there, but in here instead! I don't care if there are five more mouths to feed. I just want to know where they are and have a general idea of what they're doing. No more of this monster chasing shit. I'm getting too old."

Joyce beamed. "Jim! Yes! That's perfect. We can ask the kids what they want and have them help. We could paint the west wall, and put a TV set down there!"

"Compromise." Jim puffed on his cigarette, perfectly satisfied.

A pleasant smile on her lips, Joyce leaned on her chin. "I have to say, Hop. You've really picked up this parenting a teenager thing." Suddenly she got out of her chair. "Come here."

"Yeah?" Jim watched her curiously.

She took the cigarette from between his lips and put it out in the ashtray. "Come here," she repeated as she pulled him to his feet. She slid those delicate hands around his neck and kissed him. Really kissed him. Kissed him like she had something else in mind. Before he knew it, they were stumbling for the bedroom, unable to take their hands off of each other, laughing and bumping into the bookshelf in the hallway before finding the bedroom door.

Jim lifted Joyce up and gently tossed her onto the bed. God, she was tiny. Sometimes he worried he'd crush her, but she was spry and certainly knew how to hold her own.

She laughed and sat up straighter. Donning a Russian accent, she grew solemn. "Taking me in under suspicion, Chief Hopper?" Her fake Russian accent was terrible but Jim loved it. Joyce batted her eyes up at him. "You von't break me. You'll haff to punish me before I'll talk!" She threw her face over her shoulder in fake defiance. "Do your vorst, comrade."

Hanging his hat on the doorknob, Jim cleared his throat. "I'm sorry to tell you I have a really tough stance on sexy Russian spies. We'll have to probe you thoroughly."

Joyce slapped her hands back on the mattress. "Vhell, quit talking and do it already!"

A moan was at Jim's lips, but it cut short when a rat scuttled across the room. It paused and chittered at him.

"Fuck!" Jim kicked at the rat and groaned. The bedroom disappeared and Joyce's voice faded away.

There wasn't a fantasy that could hold his attention for long enough to make him forget he was still in his godforsaken isolation cell. Just when he had a good thing going in his head, there was some disgusting reminder that his outlook hadn't improved in the slightest.

He'd grown a little thinner and his beard was longer. He'd lost track of how many days he'd been there. More than 70. Maybe 80. Meals didn't come regularly and there wasn't a window to track the sun. All there was to do was sit in the dim light and filth and think of more pleasant things.

It was easiest to think about Joyce. She'd have things under control at home. This wasn't her first brush with losing someone or with El's supernatural powers. *El. No.* Jim couldn't – wouldn't – think of El. Jim Hopper would not crack. His daughter was his strength and motivation. *Strength. And. Motivation!* He chanted the words quietly but still, tears welled in his eyes. Damn it. Losing your family was the worst feeling in the world and here El was feeling that for him. He sniffled and cleared his throat. He would get back to her and make the biggest, best Eggo extravaganza for them both soon enough.

Either way, as far as he could imagine, El and Joyce were both safe back in Hawkins. He was... probably not. It was hard to tell. When a chief of police finds an entire Russian outlet in his town? Well, it becomes a little harder to assume everyone in a prison facility speaking Russian automatically meant it was located in Russia.

He focused his attention once again. Joyce. Joyce. Back to Joyce. That fiery determination and utter disdain for what others thought of her. Those big doe eyes, seeing him for what he really was.

Hopefully this time the rats would leave him alone long enough that he could see the thought through to the end.